

All praise is due to Allah. May Allah's blessings and peace be upon the Messenger of Allah, and upon his family, his companions, and those who follow him. As for what follows:

From among the blessings that Allah bestows upon His slaves is that He has legislated for them special occasions for them to perform acts of worship through which they can make up for what they've missed as well as for any shortcomings in their worship. And perhaps the greatest of these occasions are the first ten days of the sacred month of Dhul-Hijjah.

The Virtue of the First Ten Days of Dhul-Hijjah:

1 – Allah ﷻ swears by the first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah in His statement, “By the dawn. By the ten nights” (Al-Fajr 1-2). Ibn Kathir states, “What's intended by the ten nights is the ten [days] of Dhul-Hijjah, as stated by Ibn ‘Abbas, Ibn az-Zubayr, Mujahid, and a number of the salaf and the khalaf” (Tafsir al-Quran al-‘Adhim).

And Allah ﷻ does not swear except by something significant! Ibnul-Qayyim states, “A time period that contains the likes of these deeds is deserving of having the Lord ﷻ swear by it” (At-Tibyan fi Aqşam al-Quran).

2 – The Prophet ﷺ clarified that the first ten days of the month of Dhul-Hijjah are the best days in this dunya, and that a good deed performed during these days is better than any deeds performed on any other day. Ibn ‘Abbas ﷺ narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said, “There are no days during which a good deed performed is more beloved to Allah than these days,” meaning the ten days of Dhul-Hijjah. They said, “O Messenger of Allah, not even jihad for the cause of Allah?” He said, “Not even jihad for the cause of Allah, except for a man who heads out with his life and his wealth and does not return with any of that” (Reported by al-Bukhari).

Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali states, “This hadith indicates that a deed performed during these days (i.e. the ten days of Dhul-Hijjah) is more beloved to Allah than a deed performed during any [other] days of the dunya without exception. And if it is more beloved to Allah, then it is more virtuous in His sight” (Lata’if al-Ma’arif fima li-Mawasim al-‘Am min al-Wadha’if).

3 – Among these ten days is a day that is tremendous in the sight of Allah. It is the Day of ‘Arafah – the Witnessed Day – the day on which Allah completed the religion. Fasting on this

day atones for the sins of two years. Abu Qatadah al-Ansari ﷺ narrated, saying, “Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, ‘I anticipate from Allah that fasting the Day of ‘Arafah will atone for [the sins of] the year before it and the year after it’” (Reported by Muslim).

4 – Also among these ten days is the Day of Slaughter, which is the greatest day of the year. It is the Day of al-Hajj al-Akbar (the Greater Pilgrimage), which combines together multiple acts of obedience and worship the likes of which are not combined together by any other day. Ibn Hajar states, “What is apparent is that the reason for the ten days of Dhul-Hijjah being distinguished over others is due to the most significant acts of worship being combined therein, and they are: Prayer, fasting, charity, and hajj, and this does not occur on any other [days]” (Fath al-Bari). Ibnul-Qayyim states, “The ten days of Dhul-Hijjah were only deemed more virtuous on account of their [special] days, since they include the Day of Slaughter and the Day of ‘Arafah” (Zad al-Ma’ad).

The Most Important Acts of Worship during the First Ten Days of Dhul-Hijjah:

Reaching these ten days is a tremendous blessing from Allah ﷻ that only those who strive in worship truly appreciate. It is obligatory on the Muslim slave of Allah to have a sense of appreciation for this blessing and to take advantage of the opportunity, for the salaf would strive to perform acts of worship during these days to a degree that they would not strive to on any other day, as is established in their noble biographies.

The virtuous deeds that a Muslim should endeavor to perform during these days are very many, and they include the following: Waging jihad for the cause of Allah, reciting the Quran, observing the daily prayers in the masjid with the Jama’ah, being dutiful to one's parents, connecting the ties of kinship, being gracious towards one's neighbors, reconciling between people, showing generous hospitality to one's guest, spending one's wealth for the cause of Allah, visiting the sick, cleansing one's heart of any ill will towards other Muslims, etc.

However, there are specific deeds that carry a special status during these days, including the following:

1 – **Making abundant dhikr.** Allah ﷻ says, “And [that they may] mention the name of Allah on known days” (Al-Hajj 28). Ibn Rajab states, “The majority of the scholars hold that these known days are the ten days of Dhul-Hijjah” (Al-Lata’if).

For this reason, the Prophet ﷺ would call the Muslims to make abundant tahlil (saying “la ilaha illallah”), takbir (saying “Allahu akbar”), and tahmid (saying “alhamdulillah”), as in his statement, “There are no days that are more significant in the sight of Allah, and [no days] in which a [good] deed is more beloved to Him than these ten days, so make abundant tahlil, takbir, and tahmid in them” (Sahih; Reported by Ahmad and others).

In his Sahih, al-Bukhari states, “‘Umar ﷺ would make takbir in his tent in Mina, and the people in the masjid would hear him and make takbir, and the people in the market would make takbir, to the point that Mina would be shaking with takbir. Ibn ‘Umar would make takbir in Mina throughout those days, and would do so following each prayer, and likewise on his mattress, and in his tent, and as he sat, and as he walked, on each one of those days.”

Therefore, among the deeds that are specific to these ten days is to make takbir, with men raising their voices and women doing so with their voices lowered.

Here, there are two types of takbir: The first type is the takbir that is made at any given time from the first of the ten days up to the last of the days of tashriq (i.e. the three days following Eid al-Adha). The second type is the takbir that is made specifically immediately following each of the five daily prayers (i.e. it is made after the taslim at the end of the prayer), and it begins from fajr on the Day of ‘Arafah – for those who are not performing hajj – and continues up to ‘asr on the last of the days of tashriq. As for those performing hajj, they begin making takbir when they stone “jamrat al-‘aqabah” on the day of Eid.

The wording of the takbir is as follows: “Allahu akbar, Allahu akbar, la ilaha illallah. Wallahu akbar, Allahu akbar, wa lillahlil-hamd.”

2 – **Fasting.** It is recommended for a Muslim to fast the first nine days of Dhul-Hijjah (whether all of them or only some of them). Hunaydah Ibn Khalid narrated from his wife, who said, “One of the wives of the Prophet ﷺ narrated to me that he would fast nine days in Dhul-Hijjah, the Day of ‘Ashura, and three days in every month” (Sahih; Reported by an-Nasa’i). Most of the scholars hold the view that one should fast these nine days. An-Nawawi states, “Fasting the [first] nine days of Dhul-Hijjah is very strongly recommended” (Al-Minhaj).

3 – **Slaughtering the udhiyah (sacrificial animal).** Among the deeds recommended during the ten days of Dhul-Hijjah is to

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seek to come closer to Allah ﷻ by slaughtering the udhiyah. The udhiyah is an emphasized sunnah, and the emphasis is even greater with respect to those who have a greater ability to carry it out (i.e. those who have ample wealth). So a Muslim who is capable of performing this deed should not be negligent of it, because it is a deed that Allah's Messenger ﷺ persisted upon, as did his companions .

Ibn 'Umar  narrated, saying, "Allah's Messenger ﷺ lived in Madinah for ten years, slaughter [the udhiyah each year]" (Reported by at-Tirmidhi, who declared it hasan). Ibnul-Qayyim states, "And he ﷺ would not leave off the udhiyah" (Zad al-Ma'ad).

4 – Hajj and 'umrah. Among the most virtuous deeds that the slave of Allah can perform during these ten days is to make the pilgrimage to the Sacred House of Allah. One for whom Allah facilitates the pilgrimage to His sacred house and who performs the sacred rites in the required manner has attained a share in the statement of the Prophet ﷺ "One 'umrah to the next is an atonement for what is between them [of sins], and a hajj free of sin has no reward other than Jannah" (Reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim).

We ask Allah ﷻ to empower the mujahidin of the Islamic State in Najd and Hijaz, to liberate Makkah and Madinah at their hands from the tawaghit of Al Salul (may Allah disgrace them), and to bless us with the performance of hajj and 'umrah under the shade of the rule of the Shari'ah.

Important Note:

One might ask, how do we combine between the hadith of the Prophet ﷺ in which he attributes greater virtue to deeds performed in the first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah over all other deeds with the many mutawatir hadiths that attribute greater virtue to jihad for the cause of Allah over all other deeds and declare it to be the top of the hump of Islam? An example of the latter is the hadith of Abu Hurayrah  in which Allah's Messenger ﷺ was asked, "Which deed is best?" So he replied, "To believe in Allah and His Messenger." It was said, "Then what?" He said, "To wage jihad for the cause of Allah" (Reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim).

In combining these texts, the author of Fayd al-Bari states, "All this is if jihad is not fard 'ayn (an individual obligation), because any talk concerning virtuous deeds is with regards to what is not obligatory." Ibn Rajab states, "Obligatory deeds during the ten

days of Dhul-Hijjah are more virtuous than the obligatory deeds during any other ten-day period, and voluntary deeds during this period are more virtuous than voluntary deeds of any other ten-day period. However, the voluntary deeds of the ten days of Dhul-Hijjah are not more virtuous than the obligatory deeds of other ten-day periods. So fasting during a ten-day period in Ramadan is more virtuous than fasting during the first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah, because an obligatory deed is better than a voluntary deed" (Fath al-Bari).

What is established among the scholars of the Shari'ah is that jihad – even if it is offensive jihad – is the best of deeds, and nothing at all is equivalent to it. Shaykhul-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah states, "The scholars have agreed – as far as I know – that there is no voluntary deed better than jihad, for it is better than a voluntary hajj, better than a voluntary fast, and better than a voluntary prayer" (Majmu' al-Fatawa).

If this is the how it is with regards to offensive jihad, how then when it is a defensive jihad and it becomes an individual obligation on every Muslim, as is the case today! Ibn Taymiyyah states with regards to the jihad to repel the Tatar invasion, "By Allah, even if the first forerunners from among the Muhajirin and Ansar – such as Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthman, 'Ali, and others – were present in this era, among the best of their deeds would be to wage jihad against these criminals" (Majmu' al-Fatawa).

Therefore, when jihad is obligatory (as is the case with defensive jihad), it is better than all other acts of worship (both obligatory as well as voluntary), and when jihad is voluntary (as is the case with offensive jihad) and it occurs during the first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah, it is better than any other voluntary deed that the slave of Allah could offer.

My Dear Muslim Brother: Take advantage of these significant days, for by Allah, they are invaluable. Take the initiative and hasten to do good deeds before time runs out, for today is the time for deeds without reckoning, but tomorrow there will be reckoning with no opportunity to perform deeds.

O Allah, cause us to reach the first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah

O Allah, aid us during these days in remembering You, being grateful to You, and worshiping You in goodness

O Allah, bestow blessings and peace upon our prophet, Muhammad, and upon his family and companions